

## BRUCE BEACH HISTORY – 2007

### The Tout Family

Many of us know about the McCosh family and how helpful they were to Bruce Beachers but, in general, we know less about other pioneering farming families in the area. For this reason, this year's note is on the Tout family who farmed the land currently owned by the Collins, immediately above our Church yard and beyond. Conversations with Grant Collins, old newspaper clippings and reunion publications in the Ripley Library, and primary documents in the Bruce County Archives, Southampton, yielded information on the Tout Family.

The earliest date I could find for any Touts in the area was in the *Directory of the County of Bruce, Canada West*, published in 1867, which records William Tout (b.1839-d.1919) on Concession A, Lot 36. This date is supported by Census records. No Touts were included in the 1861 census but by 1871, William, his wife Mary (née Walsh) and six children are listed. William is described as a farmer and a Methodist, who was born in England whereas Mary was born in Ontario in 1839 too but of Irish origin. Their first house was built below the hill when the only road ran along the lakeshore but they farmed above the hill as well and that is where they built their barns.

Mary and William had nine children. Of these, Stephen (1873-1939), Ellen (1875-1952), and Francis (1878-1948), known as Frank, are the most interesting to us because Stephen and Ellen remained on the homestead and Frank settled just south of it. The first house on this southern property was built on the hill terrace, south of the second green of the Bruce Beach Golf Course. Later, the beautiful cobblestone house now belonging to Eugene Schweitzer (#14A) was built above the hill. William Tout bought this land, Lot 31, from Alex McCosh in 1907 and then Frank obtained it from his father in 1912.

Stephen never married and neither did Ellen who "kept house for him" in the new yellow brick house which Grant and Carol Collins now occupy. Stephen paid \$1.00 for this house to his siblings, George and Charles, as the executors of their father's will, with the proviso that he reserve one bedroom for Ellen.

Over the years, Steve aided the first Bruce Beachers in many ways. He marked the lots claimed by some by constructing their cellars and he built the cobblestone fireplaces still in use in some cottages. Before there were horse-drawn deliveries from town, Steve sold basic commodities to the summer residents. My mother, then Eleanor Sedgewick, (#34), remembered walking up a path on the hill regularly to get milk, butter and eggs and sometimes fruits and vegetables. Cottagers' mail could be delivered to his address too. The first beach tennis courts were constructed on Steve's property below the hill, known as "the Flats" (now our church yard), where the clay was exposed by the grazing of his sheep. Stephen farmed here until his death in December, 1939.

In 1941, Stephen's executors and his sister Ellen sold 14 and 9/10 acres of the "Flats" in Lots 35 and 36 to Donald McKerroll, Richard Davidson, and Norman MacEachern for \$1500 and thus, the seeds of Touts Grove were planted.

Frank is of significance to us too, not only because he farmed in the immediate vicinity of the beach but also because he and his wife, Matilda Smith, had one child named Wm. Robert Leonard (1909-1976), who was known as Leonard, who farmed just north of the Tout's Hill Road. In 1942, Ellen sold 7.9 acres of the old family farm to Leonard and his wife Mary Farrell. Seven days later, they sold this same parcel of land to Sidney W. Huff Jr. and Beatrice Clark. These transactions created space for the baseball diamond which is a very significant spot in Bruce Beach life.

Kincardine Cemetery records show that William, Mary, and their children, except a daughter who died young, are interred there as is Leonard. However, searching the graveyard on a suitably stormy, November weekend did not result in the location of their plots. Perhaps on a nicer day, I will find them or perhaps they have no markers. But there is a memorial plaque to Stephen on the altar in our church yard. This will help us to remember this pioneering family and their generosity towards our grandparents/parents, their direct and indirect contributions to sports at Bruce Beach and to the church, and for their having erected three beautiful houses for us to admire on Lake Range Road.

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